

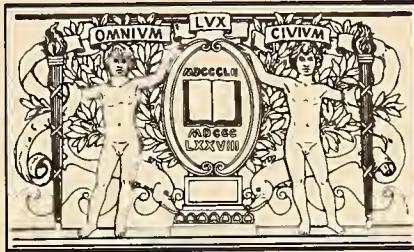
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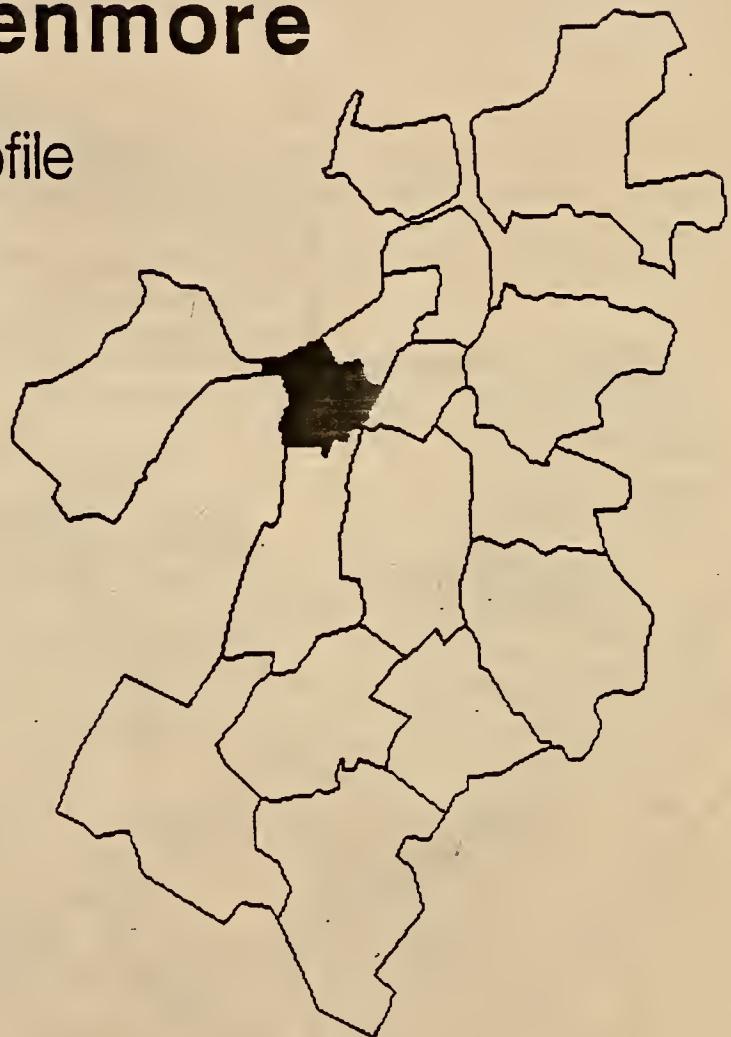
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Fenway-Kenmore

Neighborhood Profile

1988



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Policy Development and Research

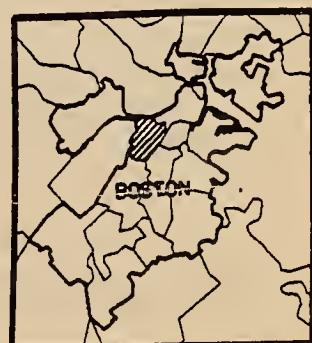
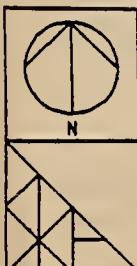
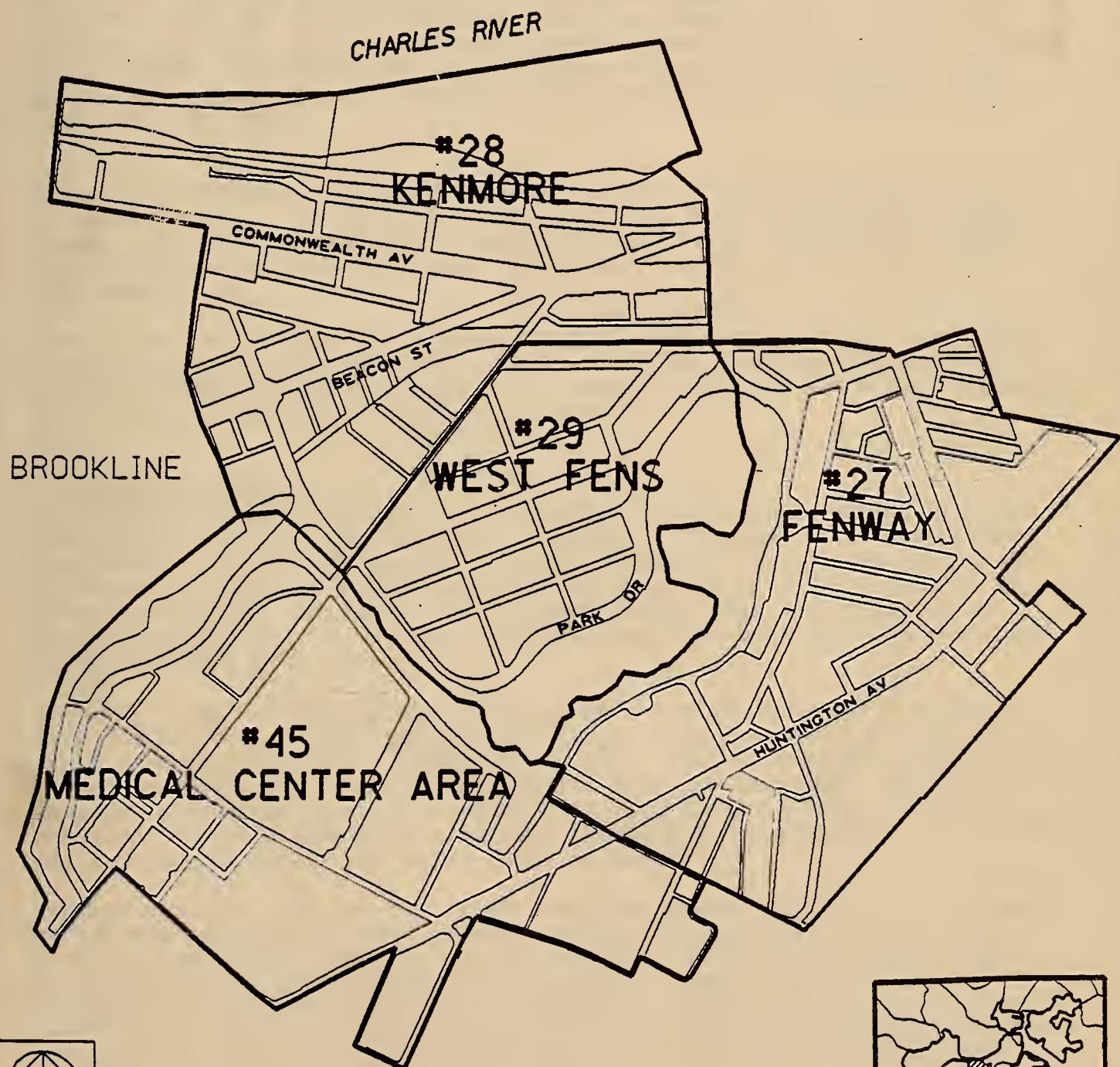
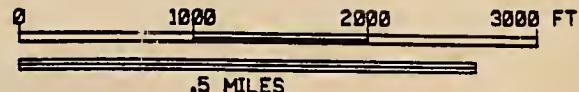
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PLANNING DISTRICT #7

FENWAY/KENMORE

AND NEIGHBORHOOD STATISTICAL AREAS



FENWAY/KENMORE NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

Introductory Overview

The Fenway was the last of Boston's neighborhoods constructed on filled land. Institutions, attracted by Olmsted's park in the Fens, began to locate in the area in the 1890s. The first of the area's institutions, the Christian Science Church, was constructed in 1894. The Massachusetts Historical Society, Symphony Hall, the Boston Medical Society, Horticultural Hall, the New England Conservatory, Simmons College, and the Isabella Stuart Gardner residence, now a museum, were constructed in the 1890s and early 1900s.

Today, many additional institutions including Boston University and Northeastern are located in the area. The first townhouses in the area were constructed in the Seven Streets area, between Massachusetts and Huntington avenues, and the Fens, simultaneously with institutional development. Apartment houses began to be constructed after World War I.

Fenway-Kenmore is unique among Boston's neighborhoods because of its concentration of college students and young adults. Residents are relatively well-educated, live in small, non-family households and have low incomes. About four out of ten residents live in college dormitories or other group quarters.

I. Neighborhood History

One century ago, the problems of the Fenway-Kenmore area, then referred to in city annals as "virtually an unusable asset," prompted the formation of the Boston Park Commission. The group was charged with both developing a park system for the city and solving the drainage difficulties of the Back Bay Fens, a notorious collector of sewage, swamp water, and flood runoff of nearby rivers. Not until Frederick Law Olmsted was called on to review the situation three years later were both objectives accomplished in a single scheme.

According to his recommendations, tidal gates for the Muddy River and Stony Brook were constructed, a sewage interceptor was buried in the Fens basin, and fill was placed around the conduit to create a public park. Olmsted's ingenious solution led to renewed residential and commercial development in Boston and enabled the westward expansion of the city. By 1920, the former mud flats along the Fens were filled completely with land, with the Fens dividing the Kenmore Square portion to the north and west and the Fenway part to the south and east.

Together with the park, two other factors were instrumental in the early development of the area: advances in mass transit and a major downtown fire. Horsecar lines, appearing around 1855, replacing the omnibus. Three decades later, electric cars further improved service. Through various linkages, Kenmore Square and lower Huntington Avenue became especially accessible by public transportation as well as by automobile on newly constructed streets and bridges. Meanwhile, the Boston Fire of 1872 led such institutions as the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Christian Science Church and the Boston Symphony Orchestra to settle near the Fens instead of the downtown in the late 1800s.

The Fenway-Kenmore area continued to attract and hold various institutions -- educational, cultural, medical and social -- of national and local importance. Nearby, apartment buildings were constructed early this century, joining the brownstone and

brick residences of the Symphony and Ruggles neighborhoods. These speculator-built apartment houses varied in quality of construction and, subsequently, in their maintenance. The slow deterioration typical of intown housing and commercial conditions during the late 1950s and early 1960s, together with the expansion needs of the Christian Science Church, led to the formation of a renewal plan by the Boston Redevelopment Authority in 1965.

Intending to rejuvenate the area through both large-scale reconstruction and improvements to existing neighborhoods and facilities, the Fenway Urban Renewal Project concentrated its initial activities in the vicinity of the Christian Science complex. Eventually its program erupted into a controversy between certain residents opposed to its plans for redevelopment, with a lawsuit in the early 1970s delaying new construction and project improvements, and providing for the formation of the Fenway Project Area Committee (FenPAC), a citizen advisory group.

Earlier, the portion of the district to the north and west of the Fens had experienced market development and decline in the century following Olmsted's improvements to the area. Kenmore Square had existed prior to the redesign of the Fens as an annex of the downtown characterized by fine hotels, shops and professional offices. Wealthy families moved into townhouses on Bay State Road around the turn of the century, and the Peterborough and Audubon Circle areas were built up with large apartment structures by speculative developers in ensuing decades.

Just south of the square, a light industrial and wholesale district flourished. The fibre of these sections has changed greatly in the past thirty years because of the dominance of Boston University and other colleges over the area, the placement of highway and railroad lines, a major sports facility (Fenway Park), and the change in locational preferences of offices and manufacturing facilities.

Table Ia. Population and Housing, 1950 - 1980

	1950	1960	1970	1980
Population	36,649 (4.6)	32,963 (4.7)	32,965 (5.1)	30,842 (5.5)
Housing units	13,082 (5.9)	15,049 (6.3)	13,243 (5.7)	12,468 (5.2)
Persons/unit	2.8	2.2	2.5	2.5

Note: figures in brackets are percent of Boston total.

See section at end of profile describing sources, as well as the methodology.
Source: a)

II. Demographics

Fenway-Kenmore is an area mainly of young adults. Over one-third of its residents lived in group quarters in 1985. Seen another way, one-third of Boston's total group quarters population lived in Fenway/Kenmore. The area had the highest proportion of student-age population, 15 to 24 years old, higher than any other neighborhood in Boston. There were also a good share of young adults, 25 to 34, but a notable lack of children, middle-aged adults and the elderly. Thus, Fenway-Kenmore had, at 24.7, the lowest median age of all city neighborhoods.

Table IIa. Population, 1985*

	Total	Population in group quarters	Household population	Persons per household
Fenway-Kenmore	42,320	16,436	25,884	2.1
City of Boston	601,095	49,595	551,500	2.4

* Note difference between total population and household population. Most of the following tables refer to household population as explained in the end notes for source b). Since the BRA household survey did not include group quarters population, the survey covers only the population residing in households. The survey did cover students living in private, non-institutional quarters.

Table IIb. Age Composition of Household Population, 1985
(in percent)

	Median age	0-14	15-24	25-34	35-54	55+
Fenway/Kenmore	24.7 yrs	11	43	30	10	7
City of Boston	28.8 yrs	17	23	22	20	18

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding. Persons living in group quarters were not included.

Source: b)

The share of minority population in Fenway-Kenmore has been growing in the 1980s, and the neighborhood has become home for a substantial Asian population in recent years.

Table IIc. Racial/Ethnic Composition of Household Population, 1985
(in percent)

	White, not Hispanic	Black	Hispanic*	Asian	Other races
Fenway/Kenmore	52	15	8	25	0
City of Boston	62	25	7	5	1

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding. Persons living in group quarters were not included.

Source: b)

* Hispanic includes self-designated Hispanics plus those who speak Spanish in the home or were born in a Spanish-speaking country

The student and young-adult character of Fenway-Kenmore was evidenced by its household composition in 1985. Single person households and unrelated individuals, living as roommates, comprised three-quarters of total households, whereas married couples and single-parent families totalled only one-quarter.

**Table IIId. Household Composition, 1985
(in percent)**

	Traditional families and couples	Single parent households	Single person household	Household of unrelated individuals
Fenway/Kenmore	21	5	52	22
City of Boston	36	16	34	14

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding. Persons living in group quarters were not included.

Source: b)

III. Income and Poverty

The median income of Fenway-Kenmore at \$16,300 was substantially below the citywide median in 1984. The overall neighborhood poverty rate was very close to the citywide rate, and a major improvement over 1979, but the rate for families remained higher and that for unrelated persons became lower than the citywide average.

Table IIIa. Median Household Income and Portion in Poverty, 1979 and 1984

	Median household income		Percent in poverty			
	1979	1984	1979 all persons	1984 all persons	1984 all families	1984 unrelated persons
Fenway/Kenmore	\$ 8,362	\$16,300	35	22	27	12
City of Boston	12,530	19,250	20	21	22	17

Note: Persons living in group quarters were not included.

Source: b)

IV. Mobility and Migration

Fenway-Kenmore had a very low proportion of residents born in Massachusetts, 23 percent. The large share of residents born in other states, Canada and elsewhere was indicative of its large student and young adult population. Their mobility is also evidenced by the finding that over two-thirds have lived in their dwelling less than two years, and only 8 percent of the neighborhood's households have lived in their dwelling six years or more, compared to 45 percent citywide.

**Table IVa. Place of Birth of 1985 Residents
(in percent)**

	Massachusetts	Other U.S. and Canada	Europe	Elsewhere
Fenway/Kenmore	23	45	3	29
City of Boston	55	25	5	15

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding. Persons living in group quarters were not included.

Source: b)

Table IVb. Years in Dwelling Unit of 1985 Household Residents
(in percent)

	<2	2-5	6-10	11-15	16+
Fenway/Kenmore	69	23	3	0	5
City of Boston	28	27	16	10	19

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding. Persons living in group quarters were not included.

Source: b)

V. Employment

Labor force participation was about the same for the neighborhood as for Boston as a whole, but the unemployment rate was much lower. Industries of the employed residents revealed a relatively large number of trade and services jobs. With 48,000 jobs, Fenway-Kenmore was the third largest job site of any Boston neighborhood.

The character of the Fenway-Kenmore area is shaped largely by its numerous medical and educational institutions. As job sources, these institutions attract professional, technical and service workers, many of whom are residents or become residents of the area. Eating and drinking establishments, business services, banks, and printing and publishing enterprises are the other major sources of jobs in the Fenway-Kenmore area.

Table Va. Labor Force Status, Spring 1985
(in percent)

	Participation rate (Persons aged 16 yrs +)	Unemployment rate
Fenway/Kenmore	64	
City of Boston	66	6.2

Note: Persons living in group quarters were not included.

Source: b)

* Indicates less than 0.5 percent.

Table Vb. Industry of Resident Workers, 1985
(in percent)

	Manuf'g	Trade	F.I.R.E*	Services	Gov't	Other
Fenway/Kenmore	14	21	4	42	6	13
City of Boston	14	16	8	36	11	15

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding. Persons living in group quarters were not included.

* F.I.R.E. is an abbreviation for Finance, Insurance and Real Estate.
Source: b)

Table Vc. Employment Located Within Neighborhood, 1983

	Manuf'g	Trade	F.I.R.E.	Services	Gov't	Other
Fenway/Kenmore	2,400	8,900	2,500	30,800	1,400	1,900
City of Boston	48,900	81,000	78,800	171,000	91,500	58,100

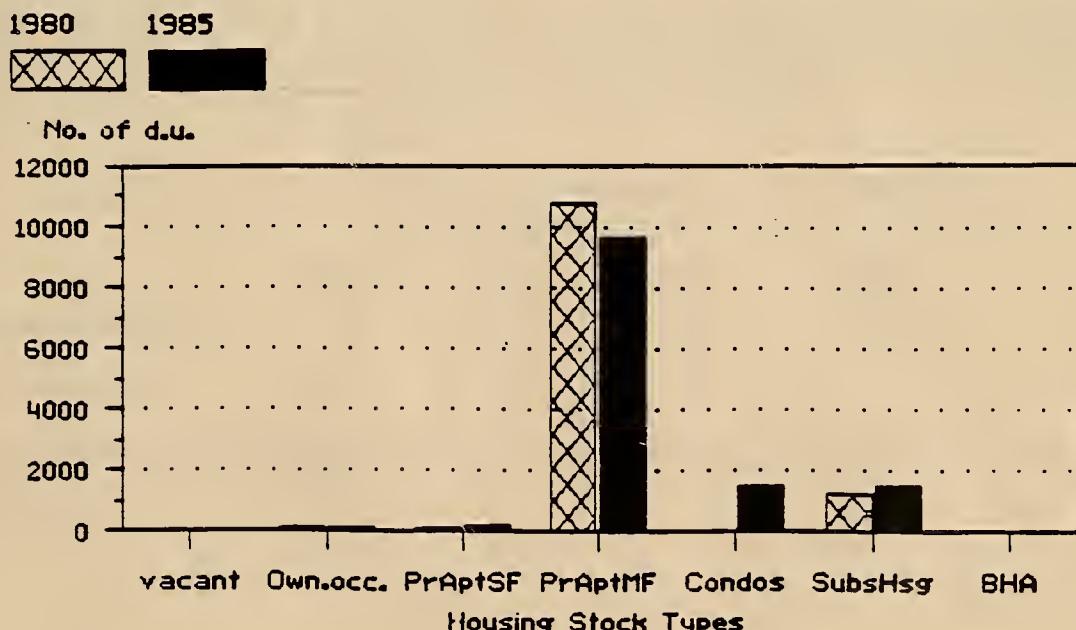
Source: d)

VI. Housing

Fenway-Kenmore had almost 13,000 housing units in 1985, about a 600 unit increase over five years. However, more than a third of its residents live in college dormitories or other group quarters. The rest live mainly in rental apartments, although conversions to condo tenure are now accelerating; by the end of 1985, one of every five housing units in the neighborhood was a condominium.

While residential turnover in this district is the highest in Boston, Fenway/Kenmore also had the lowest vacancy rate in the city, indicating that units fill up quickly. There were too few 1-3 family structures to determine averages for the area, but for multi-unit property owners, mean values in the neighborhood are among the highest in Boston. Median monthly gross rents, at \$420, were slightly above the citywide level.

Fenway/Kenmore is the only planning district in the city with no public housing. Its housing stock is entirely owned privately. However, 11 percent of it is rental-assisted through federal or state programs.

Table VIa. Housing Stock Composition by Structure Types, 1980 and 1985
(in dwelling units)

FENWAY/KENMORE		Private Housing and Condos : Assisted Housing								
Stock type:		1-4 vacant	Dwn.occ.	PrAptSF	PrAptMF	CondoSF	CondoMF	:SubsHsg	8HA	Total
1-4(SF)/5+(MF)		1-4(SF)	1-4(SF)	5+(MF)	1-4(SF)	5+(MF)	5+(MF)	Mixed	5+(MF)	Mixed
1980		8%	37	89	102	10,776	0	49	1,230	0
% of pl.dist.			0	1	1	88	0	0	10	0
1985		1%	5	105	144	9,686	88	1,389	1,480	0
% of pl.dist.			0	1	1	75	1	11	11	0
Change '80-'85 :			(32)	16	42	(1,090)	88	1,340	250	0
% chg from '80 :			(86)	18	41	(10)	inf	2,735	20	0
										5

Note: Group quarters were not included.

Source: c)

Table VIb. 1-3 Family Property Values and Median Gross Rents, 1980 and 1985

	1-3 family property values		Median monthly gross rents	
	1979	1985	1980	1985
Fenway/Kenmore	N/A	N/A	\$252	\$420
City of Boston	32,000	115,000	254	400

Note: N/A means not available because there were too few instances.

Source: b)

VII. Transportation

Most Fenway-Kenmore residents either walk to work or use public transportation. Only 19 percent use autos to get to work. A remarkable 60 percent of all households have no private vehicles, while 40 percent have either one or two. This compares to 39 percent without autos and 61 percent with vehicles, citywide.

Table VIIa. Means of Household Transportation to Work, 1985
(in percent)

	Vehicle	MBTA	Walk	Other
Fenway/Kenmore	19	36	43	2
City of Boston	50	33	15	3

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding. Persons living in group quarters were not included.

Source: b)

Table VIIb. Number of Vehicles Owned per Household, 1985
(in percent)

	None	1	2	3 or more
Fenway/Kenmore	60	33	7	0
City of Boston	39	42	14	5

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding. Persons living in group quarters were not included.

Source: b)

VII. Summary of Recent and Imminent Development

The Fenway-Kenmore planning district will see an investment of \$1.2 B (billion) in development over the 1975 to 1989 period, according to source e). Industrial development is the largest single element, accounting for \$457 M (million) or 38 percent of all development in the district, dominated by the MATEP project. MATEP, which stands for Medical Area Total Energy Plant, consists of a \$336 M power plant completed in 1981 producing electricity and steam for the hospitals in the Longwood Medical Area.

Medical investments in hospitals and research centers in the Longwood Medical Area will total \$342.6 M (28%) during this period, resulting in 2.7 M square feet (SF) of space and 377 additional beds. The major years for medical development were 1978 and 1980 when nearly two-thirds of this medical space was completed.

The third largest component of Fenway-Kenmore development is residential construction which will sum to \$179 M (15%). This development will have produced 2,678 dwelling units (DU), of which two-thirds are new units and one-third are renovated units. The types of residential units developed include 560 condominiums, 1,669 rental units, 62 co-op apartments, and 449 unclassified units.

The educational institutions will have invested \$83.7 M (7%) into the Fenway-Kenmore neighborhood, resulting in 754,400 SF of educational space. The major developments in the Fenway Kenmore area include the \$16 M Harvard Teaching Center and the former Boston State College building which cost \$15 M.

Sources and Methodology

a) - *U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1950 - 1980*

b) - *B.R.A. and P.F.D. Household Survey, 1985*, conducted by the Center for Survey Research, U. Mass. at Boston. A sample of over 2,000 households, carefully drawn to reflect Boston's household population, was questioned in the spring of 1980, to parallel the 1980 U.S. Census. In 1985, exactly five years later, the same methodology was employed again to obtain an update and to identify neighborhood shifts. This survey did not include the group quarters population

To learn more about changes in these planning districts by 1985, the several thousand observations available from the 1985 BRA/PFD Household Survey were differentiated to the limit. Knowing such changes as the shift in number of persons by race/ethnicity and age group in each district is valuable for planning. However, this divides the available data into so many cells that it limits reliability tests. The inferences should therefore be viewed as suggestive rather than conclusive.

c) - *Boston's Changing Housing Patterns, 1970 to 1985*, Roif Goetze, consultant to the B.R.A., November 1986. The 1980 U.S. Census does not specifically identify assisted dwelling units or the structure types within which they occur. It also does not indicate the type of stock in which condominiums are located, or when rental dwellings are in resident-owned structures. Therefore, available city data were carefully analyzed to obtain an overview and identify current housing patterns, as described in this source paper.

To aid in tracing the 1980 to 1985 changes in Table VIa, the housing stock was divided into units located in 1-4 unit structures, and those in 5 or more multi-unit structures. The 1-4s, dubbed 1-4(SF) for single family, are largely singles, duplexes and triple-deckers, and tend to have a high rate of owner occupancy. PrAptSF designates the private apartments rented in this stock. In 1984, significant condominium conversion of triple-deckers commenced in some districts, shown as CondoSF.

Multifamily is designated as 5+(MF), and includes private rentals in this stock. PrAptMF, and condominiums, CondoMF, as well as public housing owned and managed by the Boston Housing Authority, BHA. Subsidized housing, Subshsg, refers to privately-owned developments assisted under such federal programs as Section 221(d)(3), Section 236, and Section 8, as well as state assistance programs under EOCD and MHFA. The newly built assisted housing tends to be in multifamily structures, whereas the rehabilitated stock is more likely to be in 1-4 unit stock.

Table VIa also shows how the total stock in each time period is distributed, as well as the absolute and percent change.

d) - *U.S. Bureau of the Census, "County Business Patterns," 1983*

e) - *A Summary and Survey of Development In Boston, 1975 - 1989*, John Avault and Mark Johnson, April 1987, based on compilations maintained on "ULTRALIST" by the BRA Research Department

